

# OUR PEOPLE PRACTICES

## Additional Leave Purchase

### Policy and Procedure



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#### Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Aims and objectives
3. Scope
4. Responsibilities
5. Procedure
6. Review
7. Associated practices

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Additional Leave Purchase Scheme has been introduced to support staff members' work-life balance and to enable the University to realise cost efficiencies. Under the Scheme, staff can exchange a portion of their salary for 5 days of additional annual leave per annual leave year (pro-rata for part-time staff). Individuals must be satisfied that they will be able to manage their additional leave allocation within the normal workload and demands of their departments as individual requests for leave to be taken will still be at the discretion of the relevant line manager. If individuals are in any doubt they should discuss the potential to take additional leave with their line manager and before they proceed to make the exchange.
- 1.2 The University provides generous leave arrangements, with full time staff entitled to 25 or 30 days annual leave plus 5 customary days in addition to 8 statutory holidays. Additional leave should be used for the same purposes as standard annual leave, such as a holiday. The Scheme does not replace or restrict the use of any existing unpaid leave practices, or the discretion of line managers to grant unpaid leave in exceptional circumstances on an occasional basis.
- 1.3 The University has in place a number of schemes to support work-life balance that staff may want to consider alongside Additional Leave Purchase. These include a Career Break Scheme, Flexible Working Guidelines and various family leave arrangements. These are available from <https://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/policies/family/index.html>.
- 1.4 The provisions of the Scheme do not form part of the terms and conditions of employment and, as such, the University reserves the right to withdraw the Additional Leave Purchase Scheme or amend its terms without notice or consultation at any time. Any decision to withdraw the scheme will not affect additional leave already allocated under the exchange arrangement.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1 The 'leave purchase year' runs from 1 July to 30 June.
- 2.2 Full-time staff can purchase 35 hours of additional leave, equivalent to 5 working days. This will be pro-rata for part-time staff.
- 2.3 The additional leave must be taken by the end of the leave purchase year (30 June). There will not be a reimbursement facility for additional leave not taken by this date except when leaving the University. Staff are, therefore, advised to use their additional leave before using their contractual leave.
- 2.4 Should employment with the University end and more leave (contractual and/or additional) has been taken than has accrued up to that point, the University has the right to deduct the cost of the over-taken leave from the final salary payment. This also applies to staff taking a career break.
- 2.5 Members of staff intending to take maternity leave, adoption leave or shared parental leave should discuss with HR Operations how the additional leave purchase arrangements will be managed.

- 2.6 Members of staff who have a period of long-term sick leave can remain in the leave purchase scheme unless their earnings fall below the National Minimum Wage (see 5.1.6.).
- 2.7 Applications to purchase leave for the forthcoming leave purchase year can be made via Staff Connect during May and June. All applications must be submitted by 30 June at the latest, as applications received after this date will not be processed.
- 2.8 Only 35 hours (or pro-rata for part-time staff) can be purchased. This restriction is necessary to ensure administration and organisational impact are kept to a minimum. However, the leave can be booked and taken in half-day blocks / hours in the same way as for contractual leave.
- 2.9 In the event that a member of staff's contractual hours increase or decrease during the leave purchase year, the amount of leave requested and the deductions agreed at the time of purchase will remain unchanged.
- 2.10 Any unused hours purchased will be automatically carried over at the end of the University holiday year i.e. 31 December (this will be in addition to the 5 days allowed for carry-over of contractual leave). These carried over hours of additional purchased leave must be taken by the end of June in the following year.
- 2.11 On 30 June each year any additional leave not taken during the previous 12 months will be removed automatically from Staff Connect and entitlement to this leave will be lost. Any leave purchased during May and June for the coming 12 months will then be added.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This facility is available to Professional Service Staff in grades 1 to 10, Research staff on grade 6 and Professional and Senior Management staff, holding full time or part-time contracts of employment either on an open ended or fixed term\* basis. (\* see 3.2.4 below)
- 3.2 Unfortunately, due to either contractual or operational constraints, some groups of staff are excluded from applying for this facility. Currently these are:
  - 3.2.1 Academic staff, Research staff in grades 7 and above and GTAs and GSTSs, as there is no prescribed leave entitlement and these staff are expected to take their leave outside of term time.
  - 3.2.2 Staff holding term-time only contracts (where leave has to be taken outside of term time), staff working on 24/7 shift rotas.
  - 3.2.3 Staff holding timesheet contracts or Hourly Paid Lecturer contracts as annual leave for these contracts is calculated pro-rata based on the number of hours worked.
  - 3.2.4 Staff whose substantive contract is due to end before 30 June in the leave purchase year.
  - 3.2.5 Staff based in our European centres who do not hold UK contracts, due to different employment legislation.

- 3.3 In addition, schools/departments may indicate to some staff/groups of staff that the taking of additional leave may not be possible for operational or practical reasons. This will be particularly relevant where the cost of covering any additional leave will be greater than the cost of the leave purchase itself; for example, where overtime will be required to cover the absence or where deadlines of strategic importance will be missed if key staff take additional leave.
- 3.4 Schools/departments may also indicate that the additional leave may only be taken at certain times of year (out of term time, for example) as this may allow staff to take the additional leave when they otherwise may not be able to, due to the cost of cover during busier periods.

## **4. Responsibilities**

- 4.1 The line manager is responsible for:
  - 4.1.1 Considering whether there are any reasons to request any exemptions (not already identified in this policy) to the additional leave policy for their areas and, where appropriate, seeking approval from the relevant EG member for an exemption before advising the HR Reward Team by 6 January each year.
- 4.2 Staff are responsible for:
  - 4.2.1 Ensuring they take the additional leave within the leave purchase year;
  - 4.2.2 Where appropriate, discussing the operational and practical impacts of taking this additional leave with their manager before making an application to purchase.

## **5. Procedure**

- 5.1 **How much does it cost?**
  - 5.1.1 The purchase of additional leave will be on the basis of a 1/260th deduction per 7 hour working day (or pro-rata if applicable) which will be deducted from gross pay as a non-pensionable element. This means that pension contributions remain unaffected and Income Tax and National Insurance will be calculated after the deduction has been made. A calculator to enable staff to see the exact cost is available within Staff Connect (see 5.2.5).
  - 5.1.2 The calculation will be based on an individual's total gross contractual salary (including any allowances) at the point of application.
  - 5.1.3 If a contract change resulting in a lower actual salary for at least half of the leave purchase year is recorded on Staff Connect at the point of the purchase application, arrangements can be made for the deductions to be based on the lower salary throughout the purchase period (e.g. staff on secondment).
  - 5.1.4 The cost of purchase will be deducted from the member of staff's salary over twelve monthly instalments, starting in July.

- 5.1.5 If a member of staff's employment with the University ends and more leave has been taken than purchased, the University will deduct the cost of the leave taken but not paid for. Should a member of staff have paid for more leave than has been taken, then the difference will be refunded.
- 5.1.6 If in any month earnings are insufficient to cover the deduction, or where the deduction may take the salary below the National Minimum Wage, then the purchase agreement will cease. Any additional leave purchased up to this point can still be taken in line with this facility.
- As a very approximate guide, this may apply to staff with full time earnings of less than £1350 per month.

## 5.2 How to apply

- 5.2.1 Applications to purchase additional leave should be made via Staff Connect (see 5.2.5).
- 5.2.2 To keep the administrative burden on managers to a minimum, the leave purchase facility does not require manager authorisation at the point of applying to purchase the leave. However, staff should discuss their intention to apply with their managers.
- 5.2.3 Individuals working on projects or other time-bound activities, or where the work is based on a rota, must discuss the operational and practical impacts of taking this additional leave with their manager before making an application to purchase.
- 5.2.4 Requests to book the additional leave holiday dates must be made via Staff Connect (see 5.2.5). These requests will require manager approval in the same way as for booking contractual annual leave.
- 5.2.5 Guidance on using Staff Connect to apply to purchase additional leave and to request to take the leave is available here: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/human-resources/staffconnect/support/tutorial/employee/absence-guides.html> Scroll down to Additional Leave (purchased).

## 6 Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed periodically and in line with changes to relevant legislation or University practice.
- 6.2 As and when a full review is undertaken, trade union and staff representatives will be consulted in line with the Terms of Reference for Staff Policy Committee (SPC), Joint Staff Negotiating and Consultation Committee (JSNCC) and any other bodies, as required.

## 7 Associated practices

- 7.1 This Policy complies with relevant UK employment legislation.

7.2 In addition, other relevant University of Kent Policies include:

- Family Friendly policies
- Work-life/home-life balance policies